

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS KU
SUBJECT: PERMANENT US MILITARY MISSION IN KUWAIT

REF: STATE 249504

SUMMARY: WE AGREE COMPLETELY WITH DEPT'S POSITION ON
ESTABLISHMENT OF US MILITARY MISSION IN KUWAIT. STRONGLY
BELIEVE FIRST STEP IS OBTAINING MILITARY CONTRACTS AFTER WHICH
NATURE AND COMPOSITION OF MISSION CAN BE DETERMINED. END SUMMARY

1. POUCHED EXPLANATORY MATERIAL FROM DEPT (PARA THREE REFTEL)
RECEIVED HERE JAN 7.

2. I AGREE COMPLETELY WITH VIEWS OF DEPT AS STATED IN TAB A TO
TAB C OF THAT MATERIAL AND REFTEL. AS DEPT AND DOD BOTH AWARE,
I SUPPORT EARLIEST POSSIBLE US MILITARY MISSION AND US MILITARY
PROGRAMS IN KUWAIT AS BEING IMPORTANT FACTORS IN ENHANCING US
POLITIACL AND SECURITY INTERESTS IN GULF AREA AS A WHOLE. SALE OF
US EQUIPMENT, SERVICES AND TRAINING HAS ADDED BALANCE OF PAYMENTS
BENEFITS. QUESTION IS HOW BEST AND QUICKEST TO ACHIEVE PROPER LEVEL
OF US MILITARY INPUT INTO VJWAIT.

3. I HAVE ALWAYS MAINTAINED THAT FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS IS TO
GET SOME MILITARY CONTRACTS WITH GOK. SPECIFIC CONTRACTS THAT ARE
SIGNED WILL GIVE US INDICATION OF WHAT US MILITARY EXPERTISE IS
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NEEDED IN KUWAIT. SUCH STEP BY STEP, PIECEMEAL, APPROACH MAY BE
UNTIDY AND UNMILITARY, BUT GIVEN KUWAITI IGNORANCE IN MILITARY MATTERS,
PROPENSITY TO TEMPORIZE INDEFINITELY, AND INTENTION TO BUY FROM MORE

THAN ONE SOURCE, IT IS THE ONLY FEASIBLE ONE. KUWAITI ACCEPTANCE OF SIGNIFICANT US MILITARY PRESENCE WOULD BE DIFFICULT AT BEST AND WILL COME ABOUT ONLY IF AND WHEN USG AND GOK CAN PROVE TO KUWAITI PUBLIC (AND ANTI-US ARABS LOOKING ON) THAT KUWAIT HAS ACHIEVED UNIQUE BENEFITS TO ITS SECURITY FROM AMERICAN PARTICIPATION. IT FOLLOWS THAT WE WOULD BE UNABLE TO IMPLEMENT ANY PRESIDENTIAL DECISION TO ESTABLISH A MISSION WITHOUT PRIOR APPROVAL BY GOK, WHICH WE BELIEVE MIGHT BE HELD UP AT LEAST UNTIL SIGNIFICANT PROGRAMS ARE UNDERWAY.

4. IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES THEREFORE, THREE-MAN TDY TEAM OF COLS MURPHREE AND HENRY AND E-5 MCCAW IS ADEQUATE FOR TIME BEING. MURPHREE AND HENRY ARE BOTH EXCELLENT OFFICERS WITH GOOD RAPPORT WITH KUWAITI MILITARY. THEY AND I ARE TRYING OUR BEST TO GET GOK TO SIGN SOME L/O'S. WE WERE CLOSE, I BELIEVE, TO SOME MAJOR BREAKTHROUGHS JUST BEFORE OCTOBER WAR. NOW WE ARE NOT SO SURE WHAT THE PROSPECTS ARE. ASIDE FROM KUWAITI CONCERN ABOUT HOW US EFFORTS WILL FARE AT GENEVA, OUR FRENCH AND BRITISH COMPETITORS ARE FIGHTING FIERCE AND EFFECTIVE BATTLE AGAINST US. IF THEY HAVE IN MIND OFFERING GOK "GUNS FOR OIL", THIS COMPETITION MAY BECOME EVEN MORE FORMIDABLE. UNFORTUNATELY, FAT PAY-OFFS TO KEY FIGURES APPEAR ALSO TO BE PART OF FRENCH ARSENAL.

5. I REPEAT: WHAT WE NEED RIGHT NOW IS TO SELL SOME PROGRAMS. IF WE COULD CONTINUE TO RESPOND TO KUWAIT REQUESTS, WE MAY STILL HAVE CHANCE TO GET US MILITARY EFFORT IN KUWAIT OFF THE PAD. WE ALL KNOW WHAT EXTRAORDINARILY FRUSTRATING AND UNREWARDING BUSINESS THIS BEEN UP TO NOW, AND WE STILL CAN MAKE NO PROMISES, BUT I BELIEVE WE SHOULD GO ON TRYING. WHILE PERFECTLY UNDERSTANDABLE TO US, OUR INABILITY TO OFFER NEW L/O ON TOW MISSILE IS HURTING US BADLY.

6. IN SUM, IT IS NOT OFFER OF US MILITARY ADVISORY TEAM NOW THAT WILL CONVINCE KUWAITIS USG WANTS TO HELP, BUT RATHER NATURE OF OUR RESPONSE TO GOK REQUESTS FOR MILITARY HARDWARE AND TRAINING.

7. FINALLY, WE HERE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT ANY US MILITARY MISSION TO
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KUWAIT IS LIKELY TO ASSUME OVER-ALL ADVISORY ROLE THAT OUR MISSIONS ENJOY IN SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN -- AT LEAST IN NEAR TERM. BRITISH MILITARY LIAISON TEAM IS STRONG, HAS BEEN HERE LONG TIME, IS WELL ENTRENCHED, AND IS GROWING. GOK WILL UNDOUBTEDLY WANT FRENCH MILITARY GROUP AS WELL. I DO NOT RULE OUT EVENTUAL KUWAITI REALIZATION THAT WE DO THINGS BETTER MILITARILY THAN ANYONE ELSE, BUT I EXPECT THIS PROCESS TO BE LONG ONE. I AM CONVINCED THEREFORE THAT PIECE-MEAL APPROACH, GEARING EACH ADDITION TO OUR SMALL MILITARY MISSION EACH NEW SPECIFIC PROGRAM WE AND KUWAITIS AGREE UPON, IS ONLY FEASIBLE ROUTE. THAT IS WHY I PERSONALLY DO NOT FEEL STRINGLY ABOUT NUMBER OF SLOTS IN MISSION WE ASK PRESIDENT FOR, AS LONG AS DEPT CAN HAVE EQUAL SAY EACH TIME WITH PENTAGON ON WHETHER OR NOT

ANOTHER MAN SHOULD BE ADDED. HOWEVER, DEPT CAN COUNT ON MY
OFFICIAL FIRM SUPPORT FOR DEPT'S POSITION ON THIS MATTER.

8. FOOT NOTE: DESPITE ALL WE HAVE SAID, WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE
USEFUL TO ESTABLISH POSITIONS OF COLS MURPHREE AND HENRY AND A CLERK
ON PERMANENT BASIS WITHIN EMBASSY. WE WILL TRY TO MAKE LOW-

KEY SOUNDINGS WITH SHAIKH SAAD TO DETERMINE IF GOK WOULD
BE AGREEABLE. IF THIS COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED, WE WOULD BE IN
BETTER POSITION TO DECIDE ON NECESSITY FOR LARGER FORMAL MILITARY
MISSION. DOES DEPT AGREE?
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